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METROPOL

Cathleen M. Giustino

Kindergartenlektionen aus Osteuropa. Spiel und Nachahmung in der sozialistischen Tschechoslowakei und der Sowjetunion

Kindergarten Lessons from Eastern Europe: Play and Imitation in Socialist Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union

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Abstract

This essay explores ideas about play found in the official textbook that was used for training of future kindergarten teachers in socialist Czechoslovakia for much of the Cold War. The textbook under examination here, published in numerous editions starting in 1955 through 1977, presented ideas about play in socialist Czechoslovakia. Because many of the ideas in the teaching text were drawn from a Soviet book published for the purpose of training Soviet kindergarten teachers, the Czechoslovak volume also provides a view into official thinking about children's play in the Soviet Union and, additionally, sheds light on knowledge transfer within the eastern half of Cold War Europe. Significantly, experts in the Soviet Union and socialist Czechoslovakia argued that acts of mimesis or imitation were at the heart of children's play. They added that imitation encouraged children's creativity, rather than impeding or stifling it. This latter conception left open possibilities for some relatively independent thought among children. Ideas about play and mimesis presented here were not entirely new in the postwar era or highly unique to the Soviet sphere of influence.

Über die Autorin

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